

July 29, 2010

Legislation Will Provide Funding for Quality Medical Care for Veterans and Construction of Facilities for Training and Housing of Our Military

WASHINGTON, DC-Last night, U.S. Rep. Michael A. Arcuri (NY-24) voted to support our troops and veterans by ensuring critical funding for veterans health services and the construction of key facilities for training and housing our military. As our troops return home from Iraq, the funding is a 7.4 percent increase over the previous year for veterans' health care and benefits, including funding more than 4,000 additional permanent claims processors. The funding also continues this Congress's first-ever advance appropriations, ensuring timely and reliable funding for veterans' services.

"In battle, the military pledges to leave no soldier behind," **said Arcuri**. "As a nation, it is our duty to ensure that when they return home, we leave no veteran behind. I am proud to say that we have kept that promise by doing more for our soldiers and veterans than any other Congress in history. Today, we built on that record by making sure that funding for veterans health benefits keeps pace with the needs of a nation at war and never gets delayed because of political games."

With passage of this bill, since January 2007, Congress will have provided a 70 percent increase in funding for veterans' health care and benefits, over 10,000 new claims processors to reduce VA case backlogs, 3,389 new doctors and 14,316 new nurses, 145 new community-based vet outpatient clinics, and 92 new vet centers.

The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act of 2011 (H.R. 5822) strengthens the VA workforce to tackle claims backlogs and to process new educational benefits provided through the new GI Bill enacted in the last Congress. And, it allows the VA to process newly eligible claims for disabilities of Vietnam veterans and their survivors due to

exposure to Agent Orange. The legislation also provides new family caregiver benefits for disabled veterans.

Arcuri added, "Just as importantly in these tough economic times, this legislation is fiscally responsible. It makes cuts in VA programs that aren't working and uses those funds to bolster programs that need more resources."

The bill also addresses critical military construction needs to train and house our troops. It accelerates the Army's program to modernize troop housing for trainees, addresses unfunded construction requirements of our Guard and Reserve and expedites the environmental cleanup on closed military bases.

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